

Retirement Fund for Religious

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News

Message from the Executive Director

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You may know the National Retirement Religious Office (NRRO) best for our Direct Care Assistance to religious communities, but we are also an essential provider of educational programming for a broad audience of women and men religious, eldercare professionals, congregational leadership, and more.

It has once been said that “you can’t improve what you don’t measure,” and the same is true for our efforts. While we don’t want to focus overly on measuring everything we do, it is essential to know whether our efforts are bearing fruit.

To that end, we recently embarked on a strategic evaluation process via a survey to assess our educational resources. To ensure we remain relevant to your needs, it was essential that we included you, our wider audience, in providing that feedback.

After looking at the responses to the survey, we found overwhelming gratitude for the NRRO and all we accomplish. We also looked at your critical evaluation of what we could be doing more of and what we could be doing better.

Because of your valuable feedback, the NRRO staff and I are planning a new slate of resources that will meet your needs and offer important perspectives. You can read more about our ideas and the survey results on pages 2-3.

Although our survey has ended, the opportunity for you to provide feedback on our educational programming has not. To share your feedback, please contact NRRO Education and Outreach Manager John Knutsen by email at jknutsen@uscceb.org.

Be on the lookout for upcoming emails announcing the new educational programming we plan to offer next year. Our goal is to remain responsive to the needs of those in the NRRO community.

God bless,

Sister Stephane Still, PBVM

NRRO Calendar

December

10-11 Retirement Fund for Religious National Collection

January

3 Direct Care Assistance applications mailed

February

14 NRRO Webinar, Topic TBD

NRRO Educational Resources: Are They Enough?

This past summer, the NRRO administered an electronic survey to more than 2,500 members of congregational communities and to associates—retirement directors, eldercare consultants, women and men religious, and more—to ascertain how those affected by our mission perceive the educational tools we offer. We asked what other resources would be relevant and were able to identify gaps and determine how to best present educational tools.

The Findings: Where Are We Now?

The responses we received provided essential data to help us make informed decisions about the future direction of our educational resources. Those responding to the survey had an overwhelmingly positive view of the current educational programming, including recent newsletters, quarterly webinars hosted in conjunction with the Avila Institute of Gerontology, and our online video series.

Looking ahead, respondents said they wanted to see more educational webinars and videos. Many noted that an ideal webinar or workshop session length would be between 30 and 60 minutes. Fewer, though, indicated that they wanted a return to in-person workshops and events (*see below*). Many others, however, said they are open to traveling to attend in-person events but might hesitate doing so because of ongoing flight cancellations and delays, and also because of community finances and lingering concerns about Covid-19.



Retirement Fund for Religious National Collection December 10-11, 2022

The annual collection underwrites all the funding, services, and educational assistance the NRRO provides. Please give it your vocal and prayerful support. Download promotional materials, including text and images to share on social media, at retiredreligious.org/materials.

RANK

- 1** Webinars (63%)
- 2** Video series (23%)
- 3** In-person workshops/events (14%)

SURVEY QUESTION:
Please rank the following educational resources according to what your institute would most like to see from the NRRO in the future, with “1” being the most valuable.

Note: Of those people responding to the survey, the percentage shown reflected this ranking.

SURVEY QUESTION:

Which general educational topics are of interest to your institute?

84%

Personal and spiritual growth for retired religious

75%

Caring for members with dementia and other health-care concerns

43%

Staffing issues

40%

Retirement planning and cost of care

Note: Of those people responding to the survey, the percentage shown selected this topic.

When asked what educational topics might be of interest to them, 84 percent favored personal and spiritual growth topics for retired religious that focus on grief, end of life, and how to deal with loss, for example (*see above*). Many also chose topics that focus on caring for members with dementia and other health-care concerns.

The Future: Where Do We Go from Here?

The NRRO is still analyzing the data to produce more meaningful conclusions and future directions, but we do see a clear path forward. Key findings indicate that most individuals want more webinars and video series to support their learning.

We are aiming to have webinars and video series run 60 minutes or less, the ideal length many of the survey respondents prefer. We will continue to offer topics that focus on personal and spiritual growth, caring for members with dementia, and other health concerns.

Although our plan for future educational resources is still a work in progress, we intend to test a new session format that will be a follow-up virtual forum to the Walking Together video series. This new hybrid format will allow for more active discussion and live guidance focusing on specific dementia-related issues participants may encounter.

In the meantime, we invite you to access all currently available NRRO educational resources on our website. Please visit usccb.org/nrro and click on the “Resources” tab to find past webinars, newsletters, and video series.

Online Education and Tools: Providing Support for the Journey

Each year, donations to the NRRO annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection allow Direct Care Assistance to be distributed to eligible religious orders across the United States. These funds also provide educational programming and assessment services.

Currently, the NRRO offers a variety of virtual and on-demand educational programming that aims to enhance eldercare delivery and pastoral care as well as engage religious communities in retirement planning topics. These resources include:

- **Quarterly webinars.** These free webinars, presented with the Avila Institute of Gerontology, feature updates on eldercare trends and continuing education for care personnel.
- **Informative publications.** Professional updates, success stories with replicable best practices, and insights on the aging process help educate and support religious institutes to care for their elderly members.
- **Virtual workshops.** Videos and accompanying support materials address various topics. For example, the Tending the Vineyard video series promotes effective property planning. The Walking Together: Making Our Way Along the Dementia Path series explores a practical and holistic approach to supporting the individual with dementia as well as the community members and partners who deliver dementia care.



The NRRO strives to create and provide relevant educational tools and resources that support religious institutes in meeting their retirement needs and caring for their elderly members.



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Stay Connected

Please send changes in address, phone, email, or congregational leadership to the NRRO, c/o Karen Cañas (kcanas@usccb.org), so that we may keep our records and mailing lists updated.

The National Religious Retirement Office coordinates the national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes these funds to eligible religious institutes for their retirement needs. Our mission is to support, educate, and assist religious institutes in the United States to embrace their current retirement realities and to plan for the future.

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